

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /058 W
-----045460 140318Z /73

R 140131Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5701
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 20523

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF MITTERRAND PRESS CONFERENCE JULY
12

SUMMARY. IN AN HOUR-LONG PRESS CONFERENCE BILLED AS AN ANSWER TO GISCARD'S CARPENTRAS SPEECH (PARIS 20090) AND AS THE PS' PARTING SHOTS AT GOF POLICIES BEFORE THE SUMMER VACATION, PS FIRST SECRETARY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND CRITICIZED THE PRESIDENT FOR TAKING SIDES IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, ATTACKED THE GOF FOR ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL "FAILINGS" AND CONFIDENTLY SPOKE OF THE INCREASED ROLE OF PARLIAMENT TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY IN THE EVENT OF A LEFT VICTORY IN 1978. STEPPING UP THE PACE OF THE CAMPAIGN HIMSELF, MITTERRAND ACCUSED THE "PATRONAT" BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF SETTING ASIDE 200 MILLION DOLLARS TO FIGHT THE COMMON PROGRAM AND THE LEFT. FINALLY, THE PS LEADER CONFIRMED HE WILL NOT VISIT THE US THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

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1. ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT: MITTERRAND WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GISCARD'S LESS RESERVED ROLE, AS DEVELOPED IN THIS SPEECH AT CARPENTRAS. CALLING GISCARD THE "PRESIDENT OF THE RIHT" AND ACCUSING HIM OF ACTING LIKE A CANDIDATE, MITTERRAND JOINED THE DEBATE ON WHAT THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE IF THE LEFT WINS NEXT YEAR. THE PREEMINENT ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENT (AND

ITS CHOSEN PRIME MINISTER) WOULD BE RESTORED, AS DEFINED
IN THE 1958 CONSTITUTION. THE PRESIDENT'S INCREASED
POWERS, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE 1962 AMENDMENT FOR PRESI-
DENTIAL ELECTION BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, WOULD BE REDU-
CED AND ARTICLE 16 EMERGENCY POWERS ABOLISHED. THESE
CHANGES, MITTERRAND FORESAW, WOULD BE INTRODUCED RAPIDLY,
DURING THE FIRST PARLIAMENTARY SESSION AFTER MARCH.

2. LESS AMBIGUITY ON THE PATRONAT: MITTERRAND CATALO-
GUED THE LEFT'S MAIN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMPLAINTS
AGAINST THE GOF: A 3 PERCENT GROWTH RATE, MORE THAN
10 PERCENT INFLATION, EXTERNAL DEBT AND DOMESTIC DEFICIT
AND OVER 1 MILLION UNEMPLOYMENT. IN ADDITION, MITTERRAND
CLAIMED, THE CNPF, THE PRINCIPAL BUSINESS ORGANIZATION
IN FRANCE, IS DEVOTING 200 MILLION DOLLARS TO FIGHTING
THE LEFT, ALLEGEDLY THROUGH A MASSIVE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN,
FINANCING POLITICAL PARTIES AND CAMPAIGNING IN 150 LEBPQH
LATIVE DISTRICTS. MITTERRAND AND HIS TOP ECONOMISTS HAD
SOME MONTHS AGO TRIED TO SWEET-TALK BIG BUSINESS INTO
BELIEVING THAT THE COMMON PROGRAM WAS NOT AS WILD-EYED
AS THEY BELIEVED AND THAT THE LEFT AND THE PATRONAT
SHOULD COOPERATE IN THE HIGHER INTEREST OF FRANCE'S ECON-
OMIC FUTURE. MITTERRAND HAS CHANGED HIS TUNE FOR THE
TIME BEING, PARTLY AS A WARNING TO BUSINESS NOT TO GET
TOO INVOLVED IN THE CAMPAIGN BUT MORE IMMEDIATELY TO
JUSTIFY TO THE COMMUNISTS DURING THEIR CURRENT NEGOTIA-
TIONS ON THE COMMON PROGRAM THAT THE PS WILL NOT "SELL
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OUT TO CAPITALISM."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 20523

3. NON-VISIT TO THE US: MITTERRAND SAID HE WOULD NOT BE VISITING THE US THIS YEAR AND ADDED "PERHAPS NEXT YEAR, BUT PREFERABLY AFTER MARCH." HE EXPLAINED HE NEVER REQUESTED AN APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, AND CARTER NEVER INVITED HIM TO ANY SUCH MEETING. "SO, WE'RE EVEN." MITTERRAND OUTWARDLY SHOWED NO SPECIAL EMOTION, DISAPPOINTMENT OR BITTERNESS OVER THE NON-VISIT. ONE OF HIS AIDES TOLD EMBOFF PRESENT THAT HIS ANSWER WAS INTENDED TO BE NEUTRAL AND ONE THAT WOULD NOT AFFECT FUTURE USG-PS RELATIONS. HOWEVER, EMBASSY OFFICER HAD DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT MITTERRAND'S FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT ON NON-MEETING WITH CARTER WAS LESS THAN NEUTRAL AND THAT HIS REAL MESSAGE WAS: NEXT TIME I (MITTERRAND) GO TO THE US, IT WILL BE AS PRIME MINISTER.

4. OTHER MITTERRAND TRAVEL THIS YEAR WILL INCLUDE THE
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FRG (FOR PS-SPD TALKS) IN OCTOBER, THEN BRIGHTON (FOR THE LABOR CONGRESS), BULGARIA, SPAIN (FOR THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL), JAPAN, POLAND AND PERHAPS MALTA, GREECE AND TURKEY. IN ADDITION, A SOVIET DELEGATION WILL COME TO PARIS IN OCTOBER TO DISCUSS "EUROPE" WITH PS LEADERS, A MEETING WHICH RETURNS A PS VISIT TO MOSCOW IN JULY 1976. MITTERRAND'S BUSY TRAVEL PROGRAM FOR THE FALL AND HIS VIGOROUS APPEARANCE IN YESTERDAY'S PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD SEEM TO BELIE RECENT RUMORS THAT HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING ABOUT HIS ALLEGED POOR HEALTH.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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